

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

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R 241300Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2485

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

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AMEMBASSY MADRID

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AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 977

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MR SS SP MO AG

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: GIRM SILENCE CONTINUES

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 937, 900 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: AFTER CALLING JULY 10 FOR TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE OF FONMINS (MOROCCO, ALGERIA AND MAURITANIA) RE CURRENT SPANISH SAHARA SITUATION GIRM HAS LAPSED INTO LONG SILENCE WHICH IS PRODUCT OF 1) ABSENCE OF PRESIDENT AND FONMIN JULY 15-20 ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO NIGERIA, 2) LACK OF DEFINITIVE ALGERIAN POSITION, 3) LACK PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH INTERNATIONAL ISSUE OF REAL IMPORTANCE TO ITSELF BY ITSELF. IT PROBABLE GIRM WILL CONTINUE SAY AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE ON SPANISH SAHARA HOPING FOR 1) EVENTUAL ALGERIAN SUPPORT OF MAURITANIA'S INTERESTS, OR 2) A COMPROMISE ON MOROCCAN CLAIMS THAT WILL BENEFIT MAURITANIA.

1. ONLY RESPONSE GIRM HAS MADE TO MOROCCAN CAMPAIGN TO
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"REGAIN" THE SPANISH SAHARA WAS A JULY 10 CALL TO CONFERENCE

FOR THE FONMINS OF MOROCCO, ALGERIA AND MAURITANIA. WHEN DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY HERE FINALLY BECAME AWARE OF SERIOUSNESS OF MOROCCO'S SPANISH SAHARAN CAMPAIGN PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AND ALMOST HIS ENTIRE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD BOARDED PLANE FOR A JULY 15-20 OFFICIAL VISIT TO NIGERIA. THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TENDED HIS REGULAR DUTIES AT THE MINISTRY OF ARTISANAD AND TOURISM AND PROFESSED IGNORANCE OF THE SPANISH SAHARA AND THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE OF FONMINS.

2. DURING PAST TWO WEEKS PRESS AND RADIO HAVE CARRIED OCCASIONAL FACTUAL REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO MOROCCO'S SPANISH SAHARA CAMPAIGN BUT WITHOUT COMMENT. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL PUBLIC STATEMENT OF MAURITANIA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MOROCCAN ACTIONS. AT PRESS CONFERENCE JULY 20, FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM NIGERIA, PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH FRANKLY SAID HE COULD NOT COMMENT ON SITUATION IN SPANISH SAHARA AS HE HAD BEEN OUT OF TOUCH WITH DEVELOPMENTS FOR PAST FIVE DAYS. JULY 22 MOROCCAN FORNMIN LARAKI ARRIVED HERE FOR ONE DAY VISIT CARRYING "PERSONAL" MESSAGE FROM KING TO OULD DADDAH. NOUAKCHOTT INFORMATION (MININFO'S NEWSHEET AND ONPY JOURNAL IN COUNTRY) QUOTED LARAKI SAYING MESSAGE CONCERNED "DEVELOPMENTS IN SAHARA...BECAUSE MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA CANNOT REMAIN INDIFFERENT TO THE ISSUE OF (SPANISH SAHARA) DECOLONIALIZATION." JULY 24 PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AGAIN DEPARTED NOUAKCHOTT THIS TIME FOR SEVERAL DAYS OF OMVS SUMMITRY IN MALI.

3. ALGERIA'S FAILURE TO REACT STRONGLY AGAINST MOROCCAN CLAIMS TO THE SPANISH SAHARA MUST BE TROUBLING TO GIRM. ASIDE FROM MAURITANIA'S EMULATION OF ALGERIA'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM AND PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH'S OWN PERSONALLY WARM RELATIONS WITH BOUMEDIENNE, A PRINCIPLE FOCUS OF ALGERIAN-MAURITANIAN RELATIONS HAVE BEEN THE SPANISH SAHARA. SINCE THE CONFERENCE OF NOUADHIBOU IN 1970 MAURITANIA AND ALGERIA HAVE COORDINATED THEIR POSITIONS ON THE SPANISH SAHARA PRESENTING A UNITED FRONT TO MOROCCO. THE REFUSAL OF MOROCCO TO RENEW THESE TRIPARTITE DISCUSSIONS AND ALGERIA'S WAFLING POSITION FACES GIRM WITH THE PROBLEM OF MAKING HER OWN WAY IN THIS INTERNATIONAL THICKET BY HERSELF.

4. GIRM FOREIGN POLICY HAS BEEN GEARED TO FUND RAISING, VERBAL
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SUPPORT OF THIRD WORLD ISSUES, BRIDGE BUILDING BETWEEN BLACK AND ARAB AFRICA, AND ATTENDING ALL INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. THIS POLICY HAS BEEN LARGELY SUCCESSFUL IN GIVING GIRM FAR MORE VISABILITY IN ARAB AND AFRICAN WORLDS THAN ITS POPULATION, GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT OR ARMY WOULD WARRANT. THE DECOLONIALIZATION OF THE SPANISH SAHARA, HOWEVER, PRESENTS GIRM FOREIGN POLICY WITH A CHALLENGE THAT DOES NOT EASILY CONFORM TO GIRM'S FOREIGN POLICY STYLE OR MUSCLE.

5. WITHOUT SOLID ALGERIAN SUPPORT IT IS DOUBTFUL MAURITANIA CAN DO ANYTHING DIRECTLY TO ADVANCE ITS INTERESTS IN THE SPANISH SAHARA WHICH ARE 1) DESIRE AVOID COMMON BORDER WITH MOROCCO, 2) DESIRE GAIN ACCESS MINERAL RESOURCES OF SPANISH SAHARA, 3) GENUINE DESIRE TO SUPPORT THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE SAHARANS WHO MAURITANIANS CONSIDER RELATIVES. IT LIKELY GIRM WILL MAKE JUST ENOUGH NOISE TO MAINTAIN STATUS OF AN "INTERESTED PARTY" AND RELY ON MOROCCO'S ENEMIES TO PUSH A COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO SPANISH ADMINISTRATION THAT WILL BENEFIT MAURITANIA.
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